

Coins

Running Antelope gets top billing on a \$5 treasure

By Roger Boye

HERE ARE MORE answers to questions from Tribune readers.

Q—For years my aunt has owned a most unusual \$5 bill. It's much larger than the money we use today, and it has the picture of an Indian on the front side. What can you tell us about it?—C.B., Witt, Ill.

A—Your bill is a silver certificate of series 1899, the only variety of United States paper money with an Indian as the central figure. The portrait is of Running Antelope, a Sioux Indian chief.

The bills are valuable collector items today. "Very good condition" specimens sell for \$50 and up; brand new, uncirculated bills got for at least \$350.

By the way, almost all currency used in the United States before 1929 had the same dimensions as your bill, 7½ by 3½ inches. The size was reduced by about a third to save paper and printing costs.

Q—I read an article recently about the explosion in rare coin prices.

Among other things, it stated that an 1883 "no cents" nickel has become very valuable, selling for about \$700. We're in possession of two of those coins that we'd like to sell and use the money for a vacation.—F.K., Palos Heights.

A—Don't pack your bags too soon. Although the article didn't say so, the \$700 price is for an 1883 nickel in "brand new, choice uncirculated" condition.

Most likely, your coins are worn from having been in circulation. As such, they probably merit the "good" or "very good condition" categories and are worth only \$2 or \$3 each retail.

Q—I have some early U.S. coins I bought years ago as copies. None of them is marked "copy," however. Is it against the law to sell them?—E.H., Chicago.

A—Under the Hobby Protection Act of 1973, it is illegal to manufacture or sell any "imitation numismatic item" that is not plainly and permanently marked "copy." Your items should be destroyed.